

## **Accountability Report Transmittal Form**

**Agency Name:** South Carolina Forestry Commission

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**South Carolina Forestry Commission**  
Annual Accountability Report  
Fiscal Year 2001 – 2002

**Section I - Executive Summary**

*1. Agency Mission and Values:*

Our mission is to protect, promote, enhance, and nurture the forestlands of South Carolina, and educate the public about forestry issues, in a manner consistent with achieving the greatest good for its citizens.

We value Customer Service and Satisfaction; to always meet or exceed the customer's expectation. Never show indifference.

We value Professionalism and Pride in Quality Work; to perform up to the highest measure of competence always.

We value Honesty, Integrity and Trustworthiness; to always live the truth, even when it may hurt; to maintain a soundness of character; to trust, and be trustworthy.

We value Treating Employees with Respect and Trust; to respect others (customers, suppliers, and colleagues) and oneself; to believe in our fellow employees abilities to get the job done right.

We value Employee Accountability; to answer for our actions; to accept responsibility.

We value Teamwork; to work cooperatively as a team with no personal agendas.

We value Open Communications; to be open, especially with information, knowledge, and news of forthcoming or actual "problems."

*2. Key strategic goals for present and future years:*

- a) Continue to provide the basic data used to assess the forest resource and its condition at annual intervals. Partner with US Forest Service in acquisition and analysis of this data.
- b) Raise the awareness among the public of the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource.
- c) Improve the effectiveness of the workforce through better internal communications.
- d) Continue to assess and restructure the workforce at its basic level to meet changing needs and desires of constituents/customers.

### *3.1 Opportunities for fulfilling our mission and achieving our strategic goals:*

- a) Increasing interest in open space and the health and productivity of that space. Forest Inventory Analysis provides management information.
- b) Increasing interest also creates a need for a better educated populace to make informed decisions regarding the resource.
- c) Increasing demands on the resource to provide clean water, while the resource continues to function as an economic base for the forest products industry.
- d) Recognition of the value of the resource has created the need for protection of the resource from unscrupulous buyers or outright theft.

### *3.2 Barriers that may affect our success in fulfilling our mission and achieving our strategic goals:*

- a) To move ahead on the above opportunities will require increased funding for both capital improvements and upgrading our workforce. Budget reductions delay implementation.
- b) County forestry boards' role in management of local personnel hampers the agency's ability to change structure of the agency to meet current needs. This role, specified by law, needs to be changed.
- c) A changing populace that no longer has rural needs and lacks the understanding of basic forest management techniques needed to keep the forest healthy and productive.
- d) Expanding population into rural areas creates increased risk of fire to structures built in those areas.

### *4. Major achievements from the past year:*

- **Malcolm Baldrige Self-Assessment** – The SCFC completed its second self-assessment, giving the agency the distinction of being the first in South Carolina to conduct a follow-up self-assessment.
- **Timber Theft and Fraud** – Legislation amending and strengthening laws for timber theft and fraud was passed during the year.
- **Goal-based Performance Planning** – Goals identified in the Strategic Plan continued to be used as the basis for Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) planning stages.
- **Statewide Recreation Advisory Committee** – The advisory group gathered input from state forest users and initiated work on developing draft recreational use guidelines for the state forests.
- **Physical Fitness Program** – Completed the development of a physical fitness procedure and initiated a three year phase-in of the fitness program.
- **Forest Inventory and Analysis** – An interim report, based on the re-measurement of 60% of the state's inventory plots, was prepared and released in partnership with the U. S. Forest Service. The report indicated that South Carolina's forest resource had recovered from Hurricane Hugo. Measurement of the balance of inventory plots was completed during the year and a second round of measurements initiated.

## Section II - Business Overview

### 1. *Number of employees:*

The Forestry Commission is authorized to employ personnel utilizing 493 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs). Currently we employ 400 people with a 19% vacancy factor. This is the largest number of vacancies we have ever carried.

### 2. *Operation locations:*

Personnel are assigned positions throughout the state through a series of county, area, regional and headquarter offices. The largest single group of employees, forest fire wardens, reports directly from their residences in responding to wildland fires. Regional administrative and support offices are located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. Central emergency dispatch centers are co-located at the regional office sites. A forest seedling nursery is located in Edgefield County, and a forest seed orchard is located in Jasper County. Major property holdings include Manchester State Forest near Wedgefield, Sand Hills State Forest near Patrick, Harbison State Forest near Columbia, and a newly acquired forest near Pickens.

### 3. *Expenditures/appropriations chart:*

#### Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

	00-01 Actual Expenditures		01-02 Actual Expenditures		02-03 Appropriations Act	
Major Budget Categories	Total Funds*	General Funds	Total Funds*	General Funds	Total Funds*	General Funds
Personal Service	\$13,496,453	\$11,969,761	\$13,275,018	\$11,191,165	\$12,207,372	\$10,657,403
Other Operating	\$8,106,143	\$4,748,445	\$5,871,141	\$2,749,775	\$7,840,462	\$3,484,832
Special Items	\$1,178,603	\$430,900	\$991,115	\$240,000	\$1,320,000	\$230,000
Permanent Improvements	\$600,366	\$104,820	\$2,337,135	\$91,823	\$0	\$0
Case Services						
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$725,592	\$0	\$951,134	\$0	\$1,560,000	\$0
Fringe Benefits	\$4,183,831	\$3,753,918	\$4,320,534	\$3,711,028	\$4,327,410	\$3,250,000
Non-recurring	\$146,181	\$146,181	\$0	\$0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$28,437,170</b>	<b>\$21,154,026</b>	<b>\$27,746,076</b>	<b>\$17,983,792</b>	<b>\$27,255,244</b>	<b>\$17,622,235</b>

\* Totals include State Appropriations, Federal and other.

### Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	00-01 Actual Expenditures	01-02 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$0	\$0
Capital Reserve Funds	\$0	\$0
Bonds	\$0	\$0

#### 4. *Key Customers:*

##### **External:**

- Owners and users of forestland
- Earth science teachers and students
- Environmental education coordinators and administrators
- City and county fire services
- Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups
- State forests visitors and user groups
- Urban residents and businesses
- Local governments: county and city councils
- State Legislative members

##### **Internal:**

- Employees
- Commissioners
- County Forestry Boards

#### 5. *Key suppliers:*

Vehicle equipment manufacturers, heavy equipment manufacturers and dealers, vehicle repair garages and parts suppliers, communication equipment dealers and repair businesses, forestry equipment suppliers, office supply vendors, printing businesses and media outlets, and aerial detection contractors.

#### 6. *Major products and services:*

The major products and services of the Forestry Commission are authorized and required by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90, *General duties of Commission*.

### **Protect the Resource**

The Forestry Commission has a statewide wildfire prevention, detection and control network in place. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall take and afford such organized means as may be necessary to prevent, control and extinguish fires, including the enforcement of any and all laws pertaining to the protection of the forests and woodlands on the State."

Commission personnel construct firebreaks on privately owned forest lands to suppress fires and reduce the potential for destructive forest fire. To further minimize the effect of wildfire and smoke hazards, Commission foresters prepare prescribed burning plans for property owners and assist with conducting burns to reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat, and prepare sites for reforestation.

The Commission periodically surveys the state for forest insect and disease infestations. Because the Commission's central office has an entomologist working out of a fully equipped diagnostic lab, project foresters have access to up-to-date information about local problems and measures for control. South Carolina is currently experiencing the worst Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) outbreak on record in the state. \$220 million worth of timber has been lost to SPB since the start of the current outbreak in 1998.

The Law Enforcement Program provides fire prevention through the enforcement of state fire laws and strives to reduce arson and forest product theft and fraud. The agency has 54 commissioned officers, including 2 full-time investigators. Two investigator positions are currently vacant due to budget cuts. In addition to enforcing outdoor burning regulations, this program has handled a dramatic increase in timber theft/fraud cases as a result of increasing timber values. The SCFC's Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states that are not actively investigating timber theft cases.

The Forestry Commission is the designated agency in South Carolina to provide public oversight and guidance for technical forest management practices. The agency has established approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) and monitors compliance with BMP guidelines routinely. BMP Foresters located in each of the three operating regions of South Carolina offer courtesy BMP exams to landowners, foresters, and timber buyers. The BMP Forester makes site-specific BMP recommendations to follow while conducting forestry activities. During the 2001-2002 fiscal year, the BMP Foresters completed 318 courtesy exams. Of the 318 sites, 303 (95.3%) were completed in compliance with our recommended guidelines.

## **Manage the Resource**

Commission foresters, working throughout the state, examine woodlands at the request of the landowner. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall give such advice, assistance and cooperation as may be practical to private owners of land ..."

Based on the utilization of the land, the forester writes a woodland management plan tailored to the specific needs of that property. The plan includes descriptions of each forest stand, recommended practices to meet the objectives of the landowner, and a property map. The plan also includes suggestions on how to accomplish recommended work.

Prescribed burning services and timber marking services are offered for a fee.

There are several financial assistance options available for landowners in helping to complete forestry practices. Commission foresters determine whether or not a landowner qualifies for assistance and then assist with the application process and implementation of the practice.

To assist the state's woodland owners with reforestation, the Commission sells forest tree seedlings. Several native pine and hardwood species are available.

The Commission manages Sand Hills State Forest, Manchester State Forest, and Harbison State Forest for multiple forestry and public education purposes.

All employees of the Forestry Commission are committed to forest conservation education. Civic and social groups, scouts, science teachers and environmental organizations request programs on forestry and related environmental subjects.

As our urban areas expand, the importance of growing and maintaining healthy trees in city spaces will increase. Foresters work with urban residents, city planners, developers, contractors and local government to improve the quality of our urban environments.

### **Raise Awareness about the Resource**

The Forestry Commission is responsible for educating the public on the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws “It shall ... promote... a proper appreciation by the public of the advantages of forestry and the benefits to be derived from forest culture and preservation.”

The Environmental Education Program has grown rapidly in the past few years. Currently composed of Harbison Environmental Education Forest and the Information & Education Section, the goal of this program is: (1) to provide environmental education opportunities among school age children and adult populations, (2) to produce technical and general informational materials on forestry and forest-related subjects for educational and informational purposes, and (3) to operate two public environmental education centers.

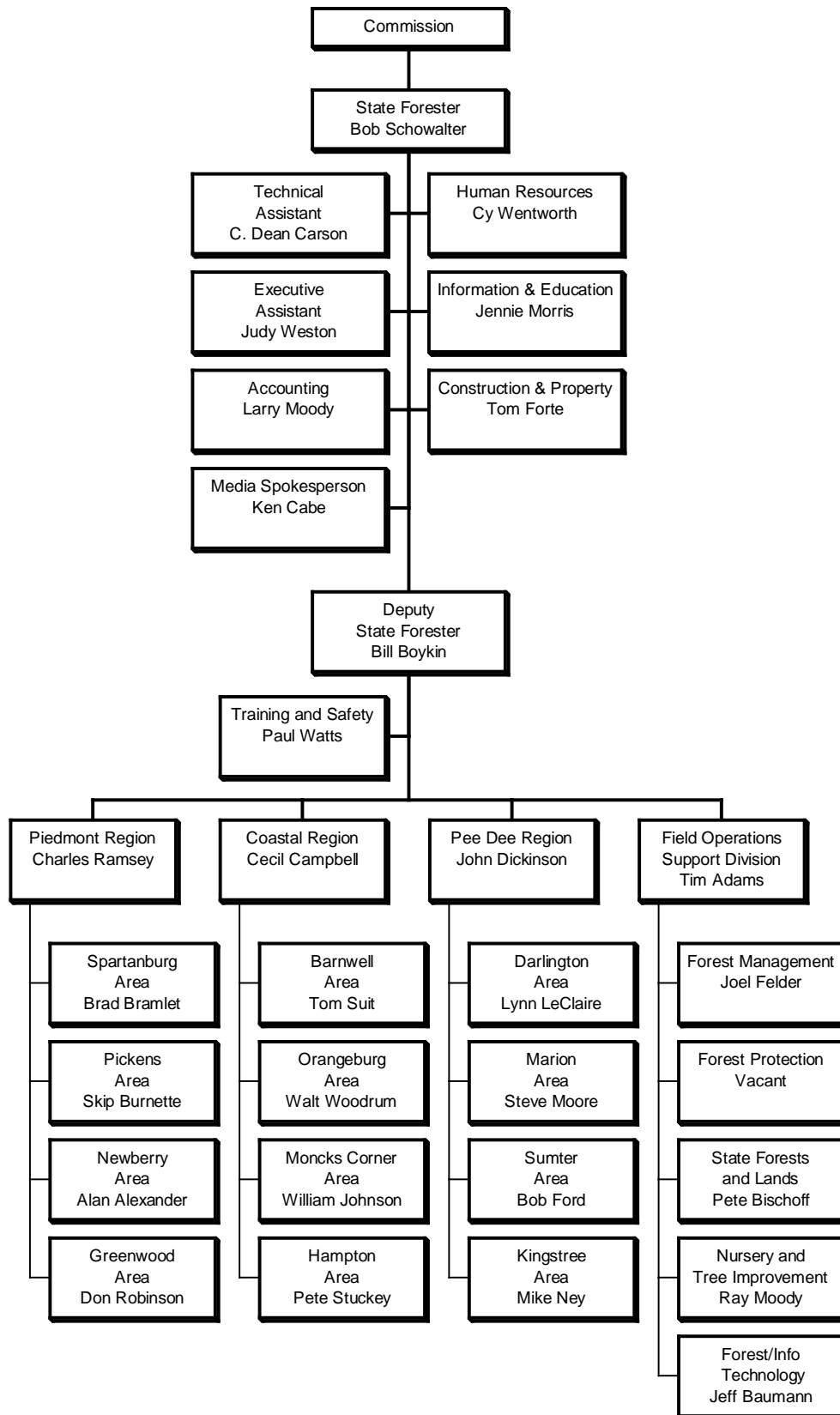
## **7. *Organizational Structure***

(See Organizational Chart on page 7.)

# South Carolina Forestry Commission

## Organizational Chart

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## SECTION III – Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria

### Category I: Leadership

*How do senior leaders set, deploy and communicate:*

#### *1.1a Short and long term direction?*

Short and long term directions are based on input from stakeholders, customers, agency leadership, employees, Commissioners, the Executive & Legislative branches of government, and by monitoring and projecting issues and trends that impact forestry and forest resources.

Deployment is through the line organization and is communicated by agency leadership through meetings with employees, customers, and stakeholders, as well as through our weekly news bulletins, news letters, the strategic and action plans, and the performance evaluation process.

#### *1.1b Performance expectations?*

Performance expectations are determined through one or more of the following: review of past organizational performance, review of other organizations' performances, input from employees primarily responsible for carrying out/monitoring the program, and feedback from customers.

Performance expectations are deployed and communicated through the strategic and action plans, the performance review planning process, meetings, and one-on-one discussions. Commitment and performance are achieved and supported through periodic and on-going reviews of expectations and progress.

#### *1.1c Organizational values?*

Agency leadership adopted organizational values as identified by employees at an agency-wide planning conference. Values were printed, framed and displayed in offices. Management strives to deploy and communicate our values by modeling. Senior management recognizes the importance of reviewing and discussing organizational values with employees and job applicants.

#### *1.1d Empowerment and innovation?*

Agency leadership recognizes the need to strengthen and broaden our efforts toward empowerment and innovation. During the year a series of meetings were conducted with middle managers, challenging them to identify opportunities and issues facing the agency, as well as potential solutions.

In a similar fashion, leadership chartered an advisory council of state forest recreational users which is working to identify opportunities, issues and solutions related to

recreational uses of the state forests. The council is developing a draft of recreational use guidelines for the agency.

Additionally, agency leadership sought employee feedback and input through the self-assessment process.

#### *1.1e Organizational and employee learning?*

Organizational and employee learning is primarily set, deployed, and communicated through an established training council which consists of employee representatives from each region and the Columbia staff. Agency leadership actively supports the efforts of the training council, in identifying, evaluating, prioritizing, and implementing internal training.

#### *1.1f Ethical behavior?*

Agency leadership sets, deploys, and communicates ethical expectations through the agency's values, as well as through various policies and procedures and professional organizations.

Employees violating ethical principles are dealt with through appropriate individual means.

#### *1.2 How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers?*

Senior leaders have established and promoted a customer focus through the agency's mission statement and strategic and action plans. During the year the agency sought customer feedback and input on various services and issues: seedlings sales, services work, technical forest management assistance, timber theft and fraud issues through outreach meetings, and recreational uses of state forests through users' advisory councils. Our most recent self-assessment report points out that we need to systematically communicate key customer requirements to employees.

#### *1.3 What key performance measures do your senior leaders regularly review?*

Performance measures that are regularly reviewed by senior leadership include the following :

- Customer satisfaction levels for forest tree seedlings, forestry assistance, & services
- Forest based economic development impact.
- Forest Inventory Analysis Productivity
- Fire response times.
- Timber theft recovery rates
- Best management practices compliance trends
- Environmental education trends

- Employee turnover rates and experience loss
- Financial

There are other efficiency and quality measures currently under review and consideration. Some areas we are looking at include: response time for forestry services and woodland management plans, new and repeat customers, quality of fireline construction, and hazard and risk assessments for communities.

*1.4 How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization?*

Senior leaders discuss and use employee feedback and organizational reviews to determine if leadership/management is:

- adequately communicating direction and priorities to employees
- identifying and removing barriers that may hinder employees performance
- setting realistic performance expectations
- needing to modify or change priorities

Our latest effort was to undergo a follow-up self-assessment during the past year.

*1.5 How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its products, programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?*

Current and potential impacts are addressed by seeking employee, customer, public, partner, and other input and feedback.

*1.6 How does senior leadership set and communicate key organizational priorities for improvement?*

Senior leadership sets key priorities for improvement by reviewing input and feedback from internal and external customers, reviewing available performance data and benchmarks, and noting trends in forestry and government. Priority items may be included in the strategic and action plans.

Priorities are communicated by meeting with internal and external customers, weekly news bulletins, newsletters, performance evaluation planning stage, and one-on-one discussions.

*1.7 How does senior leadership and the agency actively support and strengthen the community?*

Leadership and the agency support and strengthen the community by encouraging employees to actively participate in local civic, school, and community projects and activities. The agency routinely provides advice and assistance, as well as training and grant opportunities to communities, organizations and local governments, especially through its urban forestry program, cooperation with rural and volunteer fire departments, and reforestation efforts. Employees' community involvement during the year included participation in the United Way,

Camp Kemo, Red Cross blood drives, various walk-a-thons and bike-a-thons, Good Health Appeal, United Black fund, the Salvation Army, fishing rodeos, state and county fairs, state forests, and state park events, as well as festivals in towns, cities, and communities. Smokey Bear programs are brought to children groups in all counties of the state.

## **Category 2: Strategic Planning**

### *2.1 What is your Strategic Planning process, including participants?*

The Forestry Commission's strategic planning process involves collecting input and data from agency Commissioners, employees, customers, cooperators, and the public. Information/data is analyzed and its content verified, like issues consolidated, strategies identified, the plan developed and disseminated, with reviews and updates occurring as the plan is carried out.

As the plan has been reviewed and revised, efforts have been undertaken to more closely align the plan with the EPMS process and the Malcolm Baldrige National Award Criteria.

*How does it account for:*

#### *2.1a Customer needs and expectations?*

The strategic plan indicates that customers' needs and expectations will be sought through surveys, focus groups, individual interviews, and monitoring of complaints. Input from customers is a primary basis for developing action items in the plan. The follow-up self-assessment indicates that that agency should identify methods to strengthen both external and internal customers input.

#### *2.1b Financial, societal and other risks?*

Specific financial, societal, or other risks are addressed in individual action items. However in view of recent and possible future budget reductions, some of these items need to be revised.

#### *2.1c Human resource capabilities and needs?*

The follow-up self-assessment states that the strategic plan reflects the intent to plan effectively for the use of human resources, with a strong emphasis on training and safety for firefighters and foresters. Opportunities exist to improve workforce and succession planning, especially in consideration of the recent budget reductions and number of employees participating in either the Retirement Incentive or Voluntary Separation Program.

#### *2.1d Operational capabilities and needs?*

Action items within the strategic plan specify that various capabilities/processes will be examined through internal audits or reviews. Additional work processes need to be examined, with key performance measures being identified.

### *2.1e Supplies/contractor partner capabilities and needs?*

Major contractor and partner needs and capabilities are covered in specific action items, with a focus on strengthening working relationships by conducting joint planning and training.

### *2.2 How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives?*

Action items were identified for each goal in the strategic plan and were included in the plan. Agency leaders and program managers further identified steps needed to achieve the action items and the personnel involved. These action items have been included in specific employees' EPMS planning stages, with managers and supervisors responsible for tracking progress.

### *2.3 How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and performance measures?*

Strategic objectives, action plans, and performance measures are communicated by a cross-functional leadership team, program managers, and supervisors, as well as through meetings, the agency's weekly bulletin, newsletter, and the EPMS planning process. The follow-up self-assessment indicated that there is a need to improve and expand the methods for ensuring that objectives, plans, and measures are communicated to and understood by employees.

## **Category 3: Customer Focus**

### *3.1 Identify key customers and stakeholders:*

- Forest landowners
- State forest visitors
- Urban residents and businesses
- County and City Fire Services
- Earth science teachers and students
- Environmental education coordinators and administrators
- Local governments: City and County Councils
- State Legislative members
- State agencies: Clemson University, University of South Carolina, South Carolina State University, Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism.
- Federal agencies: USDA Forest Service, Farm Services Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of the Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Defense.
- Forestry Businesses: pulp and paper companies, sawmills, loggers, and secondary wood processors, private consulting firms.

- Other organizations: S. C. Forestry Association, forest landowner associations, SC Urban and Community Forestry Council, South Carolina Foresters Council, Society of American Foresters.

### 3.2 *How do you determine who your customers are and what are their key requirements?*

Our key customers were generally identified in the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90 *General duties of Commission*. As our services and products have evolved over the years our customer base has expanded to include other non-traditional forestry customers. For example, urban populations have expanded into the more rural and forested areas of our state and we are responding to this population's need for assistance on their personal property, as well as providing information on their surrounding natural environment.

Our agency uses a variety of methods to determine requirements, expectations, and preferences and satisfaction of customers and stakeholders:

- Customer Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Public Forums and Workshops
- Collaboration with Partners and User Groups
- Outreach Publications for Targeted Audiences
- Interviews
- County Forestry Board Meetings
- Monitoring of Legislative Activities

For the past two years, the Forestry Commission has conducted surveys of potential (landowner) customers and current customers to determine their expectations and preferences. Survey forms soliciting feedback are sent to landowners that receive forest management assistance or services. Customers are asked about the length of time it took to complete the service, the results of the service, follow-up on the service, and courtesy and professionalism of the employees.

Each year, agency leadership also participates in meetings of county forestry boards to discuss current forestry issues and agency programs.

Federal grants dictate who we provide assistance to regarding Urban Forestry, Best Management Practices, and the Wildland/Urban Interface.

Periodic mailings to new forest landowners, surveying their interests and needs help acquire new customers.

*3.3 How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer/business needs?*

The Forestry Commission seeks input and information through participation in a number of partnerships and councils. These include: Urban and Community Forestry Council, Wildland Fire Protection Partnership, South Carolina Foresters Council, Southern Group of State Foresters, National Association of State Foresters, Emergency Management Division, South Carolina Forestry Association, many local landowner associations, and the South Carolina Firemen's Association.

*3.4 How do you use information from customer/stakeholders to improve services or programs?*

Information about customer satisfaction and suggestions for improving services is reviewed by the senior leadership of the Forestry Commission and is disseminated to the appropriate program manager to improve the service or product. Regionally, this information is passed on to the Area and then to the County where the work is performed for improvement.

*3.5 How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction?*

Customer satisfaction surveys for forest management plans, forest services, and forest tree seedlings are provided to customers for them to fill out and return in a self-addressed postage paid envelope. This has been done for the past three years for management plans and services. Survey information for the past four years is available for forest seedling customers.

*3.6 How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer groups.*

Complaints are recorded and promptly investigated to determine all problems and to attempt to alleviate them quickly.

The Forestry Commission meets with state forest user groups on a timely basis to discuss and plan for future opportunities on Forestry Commission owned land that is used for various recreational purposes.

The Forestry Commission makes timely responses to state legislators when our elected officials seek input.

## **Category 4: Information and Analysis**

### *4.1 How do you decide which operations and systems to measure?*

Historically, measures have been used to monitor program accomplishments. Output measures were commonly used as a gauge of our activity levels. More recently however, new measures have been developed based on their importance to the overall success of our agency. Recent budget reductions have focused our attention on efficiency measures, quality measures, and outcome measures.

We have begun to design measures that are linked directly to our mission and the objectives outlined in our strategic plan. Senior management determines which measures should be developed for internal use, and which measures will be reported on an annual basis. We are still learning what constitutes meaningful performance measures but generally our accountability efforts are advancing from output type measures to outcome type measures.

### *4.2 How do you ensure data quality, reliability, completeness, and availability for decision making?*

We are continuing to learn to use performance measures in our decision making processes. Measures and data have been used on a limited basis during program reviews at the area and state levels. Senior management has instructed regional foresters and division directors to begin sharing performance data with personnel at all levels as a means of improving processes and generating feedback.

We undergo annual audits of financial records and processes. An internal auditor reviews data collection processes frequently.

### *4.3 How do you use data and information analysis to provide effective support for decision making?*

Decision makers at all levels will have access to performance measures and are expected to factor that information into their thinking and decisions.

### *4.4 How do you select and use comparative data and information?*

Comparative data from similar state forestry organizations is available on a limited basis. Each state records data differently. Contacts made with southeastern states reveal that most state forestry organizations are just beginning to track meaningful performance measures. South Carolina is the only southeastern state which tracks dispatch response times through a statewide real time computer aided dispatch system.



## **Category 5: Human Resources Focus**

### *5.1 How do you and your managers/supervisors encourage and motivate employees to develop and utilize their full potential?*

The Forestry Commission encourages, arranges, and enables employees to obtain the State's Associate Public Manager Award (APM) and the Certified Public Manager Award (CPM) to help them be more effective supervisors and better prepare them for promotional opportunities.

Although budget cuts have required the suspension and/or curtailment of our performance pay and bonus programs, we will strive to continue to reward outstanding employee performance. We consider this financial recognition incentive to be a high priority.

We also plan to recognize those employees who take on additional duties and responsibilities as a result of budget changes and then perform well. We believe that as we downsize and adjust to doing more with less it is very important to reward those employees who do more than their share of work.

We encourage supervisors to nominate their employees for the above type of rewards and we believe that these programs have a positive effect on employees throughout the organization.

Tuition assistance is available in our agency and is viewed as a win-win situation for employees to expand their educational opportunities as well as help provide increased levels of expertise for the agency.

We involve employees in our strategic planning processes. During plan development and revision, data and information were collected and shared at area level meetings throughout the agency. Representatives from all areas of the organization participated in refining information for the plan.

Although inability to fill vacancies has temporarily precluded recruitment efforts, recruiting for new foresters is generally conducted at various forestry schools in the southeast with onsite interviews and screenings, looking for bright energetic candidates with knowledge and skills to develop into future leaders of the organization. We value promoting from within to fill the majority of our supervisory and upper management positions and have been very successful doing so over the years through these recruiting efforts.

Structured career paths providing for advancement opportunities, additional skills and knowledge gained through training, and salary increases are available for Forestry Wardens, Forestry Technicians, Rangers, Mechanics, and Foresters, which together comprise over 60% of our workforce.

*5.2 How do you identify and address key developmental training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training?*

Identification of training needs is done by asking program managers to stay current on all required training and new techniques and technologies affecting their programs and requesting appropriate training. A training council meets quarterly to review training needs and is currently working on training guides to set minimum training requirements by job position. The training director constantly looks at training opportunities and insures that all personnel meet required training. Affirmative action training is provided each year to all supervisors authorized to hire.

*5.3 How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance?*

Our Employee Performance Management System uses a universal review date of January 1, which allows supervisors to emphasize strategic plan action items for employees during the calendar year. Position descriptions have been revised to reflect strategic plan objectives for selected positions.

*5.4 What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction, and motivation?*

Employees are surveyed periodically for input on issues and areas needing improvement, such as in planning conferences and development/updating of strategic plan action items. The SCFC was the first state agency to conduct a Malcolm Baldrige Self-Assessment in 1997, and is the first state agency to conduct a follow-up Baldrige Self-Assessment which was completed in August 2002. We are considering developing a survey for future use to measure employee satisfaction and well being.

*5.5 How do you maintain a safe and healthy work environment?*

Maintaining a safe and healthy work environment is accomplished by stressing safety in all aspects of the agency. Safety training such as defensive driving training and first aid training is required of certain positions. The safety coordinator looks at all accident reports to recommend ways to avoid similar accidents in the future. Safety inspections of facilities and operations are ongoing and other agency personnel with special expertise are involved where needed. Employees are encouraged to participate in health screenings and health fairs.

The South Carolina Forestry Commission implemented a physical fitness program for our employees on September 1, 2001. Participation in the program is required for all fireline employees and for those that volunteer to assist with fireline duties. South Carolina is a leader in the development and implementation of a physical fitness program among the southeastern states. Only 3 other southeastern states have a physical fitness requirement for fireline

employees. The goals of the program are: to ensure the readiness of fireline employees to perform their jobs, to increase fireline employees' productivity, and to increase physical fitness levels of fireline employees through a program of fitness and health education, evaluation, monitoring, and follow-up. Additional benefits for the employees that should arise from the standard are: decreased medical costs due to accidents and disease, increased awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle to long-term health and happiness, reduced risk factors for lifestyle related conditions, and improved morale and self-concept. The program is being phased in over 3 years beginning this year and will culminate in 2004 with the ultimate goal of walking 2 miles in 30 minutes or less while carrying a 25-lb. pack. This past year the Forestry Commission also had 32 employees volunteer for and pass the arduous level of physical fitness. This level consists of walking 3 miles in 45 minutes or less, while carrying a 45-lb. pack.

*5.6 What is the extent of your involvement in the community?*

We conduct annual fund drives for United Way, Good Health Appeal, United Black Fund, and the Salvation Army. Our agency actively participates in numerous community programs such as volunteer fire departments, career days at schools, Camp Kemo, fishing rodeos, state & county fairs, state forests and state parks events, as well as festivals in towns, cities, and communities. We bring Smokey Bear to children groups in all counties of the state. In addition, 25% of receipts from timber sales on state forests go to the associated counties for educational uses.

**Category 6: Process Management**

*6.1 What are your key design and delivery processes for products/services, and how do you incorporate new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, into these design and delivery processes and systems?*

The agency offers products and services to forest landowners and the general public in five key areas: forest protection, forest management, state forests, seedling production, and environmental education.

**Forest Protection**

The SCFC provides landowners with wildland firefighting assistance through a network of firefighters and equipment stationed throughout the state. Dispatching the closest firefighting unit is a key process in protecting the forest resource. The agency has three dispatch centers located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. Each dispatch center was reviewed in Spring of 2001 to ensure consistency among centers and efficiency in operations. The dispatch centers are heavily reliant on advanced technology. A Dispatch & Forest Technology Coordinator, located in Columbia, has technical oversight of the dispatch centers. Independent analyses of key success criteria, such as response time, are done at the Columbia Headquarters level.

The SCFC also administers the process of accepting notification of outdoor burning. Forestry, agriculture, and wildlife burning notifications are received by the regional dispatch centers. All other notifications for outdoor burning, including trade waste and

yard debris, are received by an automated voice mail system. This system is an efficient way to process large numbers of calls (300,000+ per year) in a timely fashion and to deliver a consistent fire safety message to the burner.

## **Forest Management**

The SCFC provides forest landowners with assistance in managing their forestland. This involves a wide range of services including the development of management plans, the monitoring of environmental guidelines, and the re-inventory of South Carolina's forests. One fourth of the agency's 12 operational areas are reviewed annually. These reviews are led by the Forest Management Chief in the Columbia Headquarters. Also, customer surveys are mailed to recipients of management plans or forest services. Compliance with agency-approved environmental guidelines are monitored bi-annually on federal, state, industrial, and private forest ownerships. Results are published and widely distributed in hard copy and over the internet. A key activity of the SCFC is the re-inventory of the state's forestland. Three two-person crews are measuring plots to exacting national standards. The US Forest Service is required to check a minimum of 5% of our plot work to ensure quality control.

## **State Forests**

The SCFC's State Forests demonstrate sustainable multiple-use management to forest landowners and the general public. In FY 2000-2001, the State Forests began developing a long-range plan that will address the primary uses of the State Forests. The plan was completed in June 2002 and approved by the Commissioners. Short-range plans specific to each State Forest will be developed next.

## **Seedling Production**

The Nursery & Tree Improvement Section of the SCFC supplies forest landowners in South Carolina with high-quality forest tree seedlings. Approximately 22.5 million seedlings were grown during FY 2001-2002. A 10% customer survey is implemented annually as a feedback mechanism to direct future product design. The last survey showed 100% of our customers were satisfied with seedling quality and customer service. A new customer survey is being developed that will identify the products and delivery mechanisms that forest landowners desire. Also, an annual financial analysis is completed to adjust seedling production and price.

## **Environmental Education**

One of the SCFC's primary missions is to promote a proper appreciation by the public of the biological functions and benefits of the state's forests. Educational programs are tailored to audiences of all ages. Science teachers are one focal point for training so they can take information back to their classrooms. The Wood Magic Program is rapidly expanding in response to its popularity among elementary school children. Educational programs are evaluated and adjusted to meet perceived needs.

6.2 *How does your day-to-day operation of key production/delivery processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?*

### **Forest Protection**

A number of enhancements have been made in FY 2002 to the Commission's Dispatch Centers as listed as an action item in the Commission's Strategic Plan. An older and unsupported version of Oracle was updated to ease the administration of the computer aided dispatch system's (CADS) database and to improve the performance of various CADS functions. For example, after upgrading and some performance tuning, CADS could determine the closest resource to an incident in less than 10 seconds. Prior to the upgrade, this function would take anywhere from 45 seconds to over 2 minutes.

Another enhancement to the dispatch operations was the installation of a communications recording system to help verify who said what to whom, and when they said it. It can also provide "instant recall" capabilities to the dispatchers. In addition to being used for clarifying hurried or garbled messages, the recording system can be utilized in mediating complaints, trapping nuisance or abusive callers, reducing exposure to liability, training and staff evaluation.

The automated yard debris burning notification system was modified so that all non smoke management type vegetative debris burning notifications could be directed to that system as of July 1, 2001. It was estimated that this change would redirect approximately 30,000 calls per year from our dispatch centers to the automated system. This reduction in call volume would allow dispatchers to more efficiently handle smoke management notifications, radio communications, and wildfire calls. The automated system was also modified to handle 24 calls simultaneously which increased its call handling capabilities by 50%.

Another benefit of this change was an overall reduction in phone charges even when the number of calls placed to the automated system and dispatch centers increased by 12.3% in FY 2002 when compared to FY 2001. Phone charges to our 1-800 numbers decreased by 20.3% in FY 2002 when compared to FY 2001 due to the automated system being more efficient and cost effective in handling these types of burning notifications.

### **Forest Management**

Customer surveys are sent out immediately at the completion of services work or delivery of management plans. Responses are returned directly to the regional forester and analyzed with particular attention given to any negative responses. Contacts are made with landowners where possible to review responses and correct any problems with service delivery. In general, statewide programs, such as the Environmental Management and Forest Inventory and Analysis programs, are directly supervised by a Columbia staff forester with specific training in that program area.

The Commission was a major cooperator in the 1999 National Aerial Photography Program, which acquired 1:40,000 color infrared aerial photography of South Carolina during January and February of 1999 and 2000. The Commission is currently working

with the Department of Natural Resources, US Corps of Engineers and other agencies to have this photography converted into Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quads (DOQQs). This will aid field foresters in using desktop mapping and geographical information systems to develop recommendations and maps in the delivery of forest management services to forest landowners.

### **State Forests**

Annual work plans are reviewed by agency management. Forest product sales are reviewed and approved by the agency's nine-member Commission. Federal and state regulatory agencies work closely with the state forests to ensure protection of rare plants and animals.

### **Seedling Production**

Key success criteria are included in Nursery and Tree Improvement facility manager's EPMS rating criteria. Success criteria include measures of seed & seedling quality as well as protection of the productive capability of the nursery soil. There is technical oversight by staff at the Auburn & NC State University Cooperatives, of which the SCFC is a member. Internally, agency staff reviews seedling production periodically.

### **Environmental Education**

Pre- and post-tests are given to participants in the Wood Magic Forest Fair to evaluate program effectiveness. Exit interviews are completed with teachers who participate in the Teacher's Tour. In general, there is an overwhelming demand for SCFC environmental education programs. Many teachers return for additional training after going through one of the agency's environmental education programs.

- 6.3 *What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?*

### **Information Technology**

Most aspects of our business involve technology and information management. We have established a presence on the internet as a means to disseminate information. Internet sales of State Forest recreational permits and Nursery & Tree Improvement seedlings are being developed.

The Information Systems group was realigned under the Dispatch and Forest Technology Coordinator in February 2002. The Information Systems group is responsible directly and indirectly for the maintenance and support of the agency's wide area network, 10 Windows NT Servers, and over 200 computer users and their software applications. The development of a formal Annual Work Plan was implemented to identify and set priorities for major projects and their deadlines. Technical training needs for this group were also identified, prioritized and included in the Annual Work Plan.

## **Outreach Efforts**

We have begun an earnest effort to reach under-served landowners by holding outreach meetings for minority and non-traditional landowners. Law enforcement issues, especially timber theft, are used as the focal point of outreach meetings. Once interest is developed, other management assistance can be offered. These community meetings provide a forum for question and answer sessions with local people and leaders. The meetings also provide feedback to the SCFC as to concerns and issues important to that locality.

Bill 5060, passed in FY 2001-02, amended two statutes affecting timber transactions. One change requires that buyers provide complete and accurate scale tickets for wood purchased on a per unit basis. The other provides a mechanism for confiscation of logging equipment used in timber theft or timber transaction crimes.

1. The scale ticket amendment is referenced as Title 48, Chapter 23, Section 97. It specifies the information that every scale ticket must include, and further requires that the buyer provide such scale tickets to the timber grower within 30 days of completing the cutting. Scale tickets remain the responsibility of the original buyer, regardless of whether the wood is brokered or assigned.

2. The confiscation amendment, codified as Title 16, Chapter 13, Section 177, allows confiscation of logging equipment used in specified timber fraud or timber theft cases. This amendment only applies in cases where the theft/fraud value is more than \$5000, and only when the equipment owner knew the equipment was being used in an illegal operation. Money generated from confiscated equipment will be used for victim restitution and to fund timber theft law enforcement and prevention.

Amendments associated with Bill 5060 took effect on May 28, 2002.

## **Training Programs**

Fire training is a key internal activity specific to the South Carolina Forestry Commission due to our emergency response mission. We also require employees to attend training in human resource management areas such as Equal Employment Opportunity training, recruiting and hiring practices, and supervisory skills. The Training Council reviews training policy and procedures. Mandatory training guidelines are being developed for each position in the agency.

## **Accounting Department**

Our accounting department has received four successive audits by the State Auditors Office with no findings. The State Auditor's office elected not to do an audit for FY 2002.

6.4 *How do you manage and support your key supplier/contractor/partner interactions and processes to improve performance?*

**Air Operations**

We depend on two sources for early detection of wildfire: fires called in to dispatch centers by the public and aircraft detection. Aircraft detection services are provided by both contract aircraft with pilot and aircraft on loan from the federal government with South Carolina Forestry Commission pilots. Contract pilots are trained by us to detect and report location, size, and woodlands involved to dispatch centers who in turn dispatch fire suppression resources to the fire. In addition to detection, South Carolina Forestry Commission pilots and aircraft are used in the fire suppression effort to assist ground crews and equipment with information needed to suppress the fire in a safe and efficient manner. Close coordination among agency pilots and contractors is required to operate efficiently. Contract specifications were updated and rebid during Summer, 2001.

**Equipment Manufacturers**

Our Equipment Program Manager works closely with fire suppression equipment dealers and factory representatives to stay abreast of new designs and technology. The equipment program produces specifications to receive bids on equipment and provides design and fabrication capability to the field organization. Equipment specifications are updated as state-of-the-art technology changes, such as the development of hydrostatic transmissions. Equipment maintenance, warranty issues, inventory, cost effectiveness and replacement scheduling are also responsibilities of the program which in turn provides information as needed to equipment manufacturers and other related partners. Software has been purchased and utilized to track equipment costs. The Commission utilizes training sessions provided vendors to stay abreast of changes, participates in vendor demonstrations, and shares information with sister states.

**University Cooperative Membership**

The SCFC stays current with state-of-the-art forestry research through membership in university-based research cooperatives. This is especially important in the Nursery and Tree Improvement section where we are members in the NC State Tree Improvement Cooperative and the Auburn Nursery Cooperative. The collaborative effort and related cost of conducting research is spread over all cooperative members, eliminating redundant efforts and expenses.

**US Forest Service Cooperative Funding**

We are the primary partner for the US Forest Service in South Carolina in implementing forestry-related programs. Federal funds are allocated to key SCFC state partners based primarily on funding levels and project prioritization by SCFC-led coordinating committees.

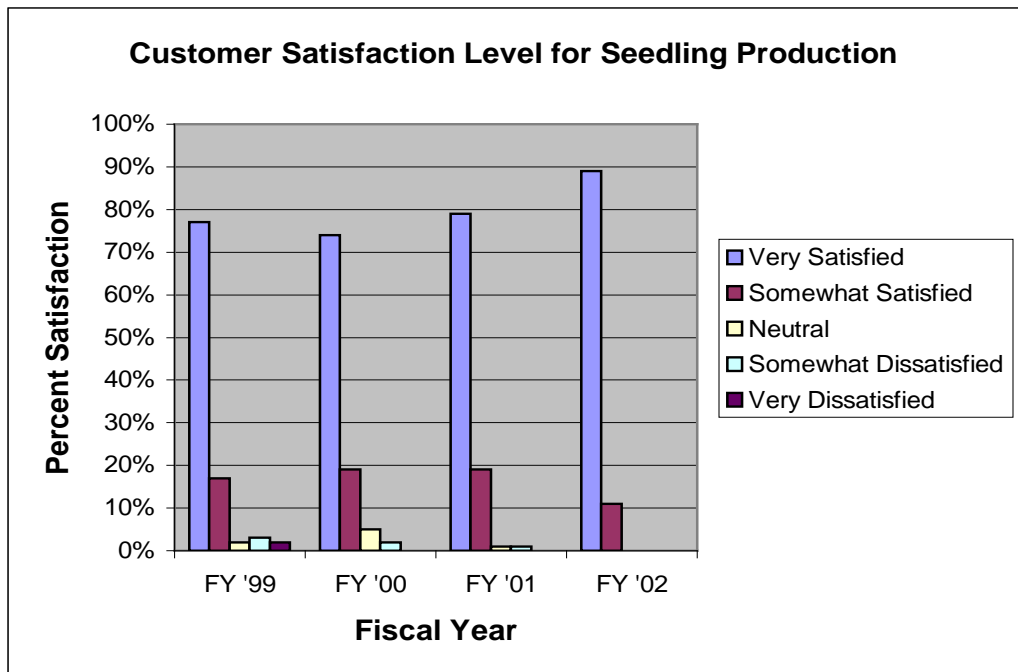


## Category 7: Business Results

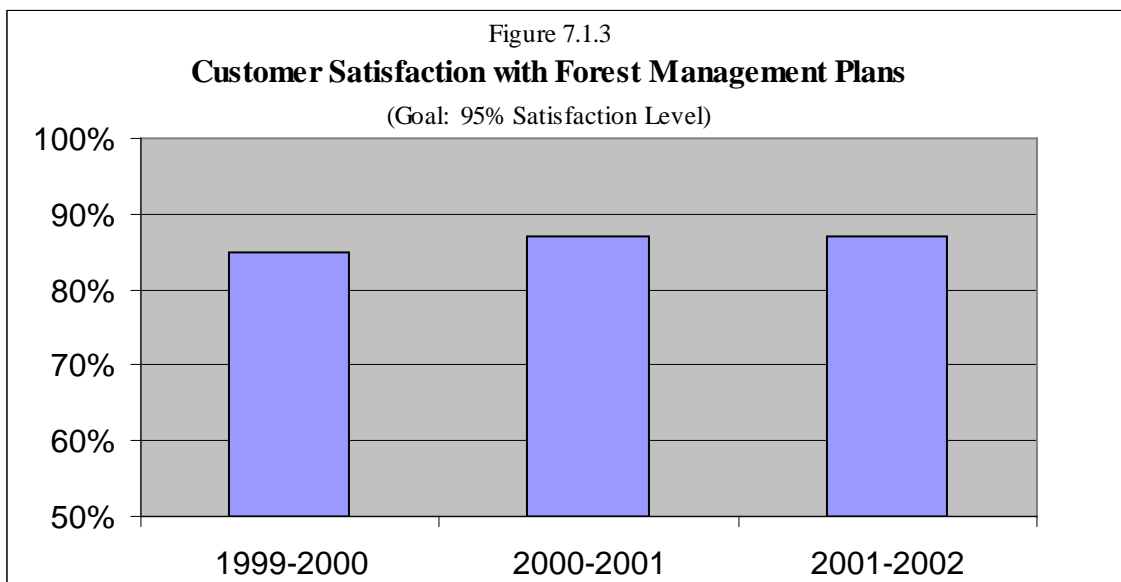
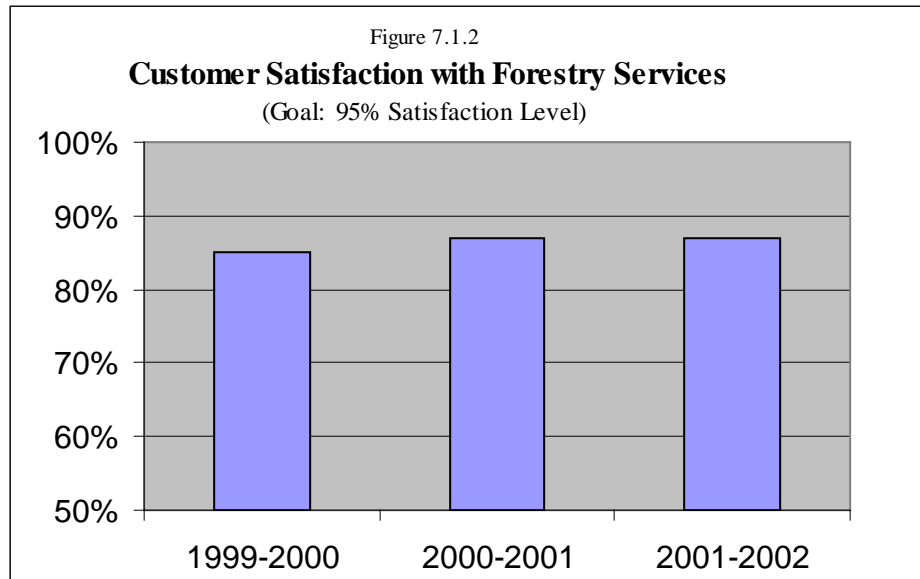
### 7.1 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?

In 1998 we began measuring customer satisfaction with our forest tree seedling products. The combined satisfaction levels have consistently remained in the 90%+ range as illustrated in Figure 7.1.1. In FY '02, 100% of sampled customers responded that they were either “very satisfied” (89%) or “somewhat satisfied” (11%) with the overall quality of our seedlings and the service provided by Forestry Commission employees. The neutral category was dropped in the FY '02 survey in order to clarify customer satisfaction responses. We routinely review comments on returned surveys looking for ways to improve our product and delivery systems.

Figure 7.1.1



Beginning in 1999 we began measuring customer satisfaction levels with our forestry services and our technical forest management assistance. Figures 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 illustrate our overall satisfaction levels. Our immediate goal is to improve our forestry services to the 95% satisfaction level. We feel this is a very reasonable and attainable goal.

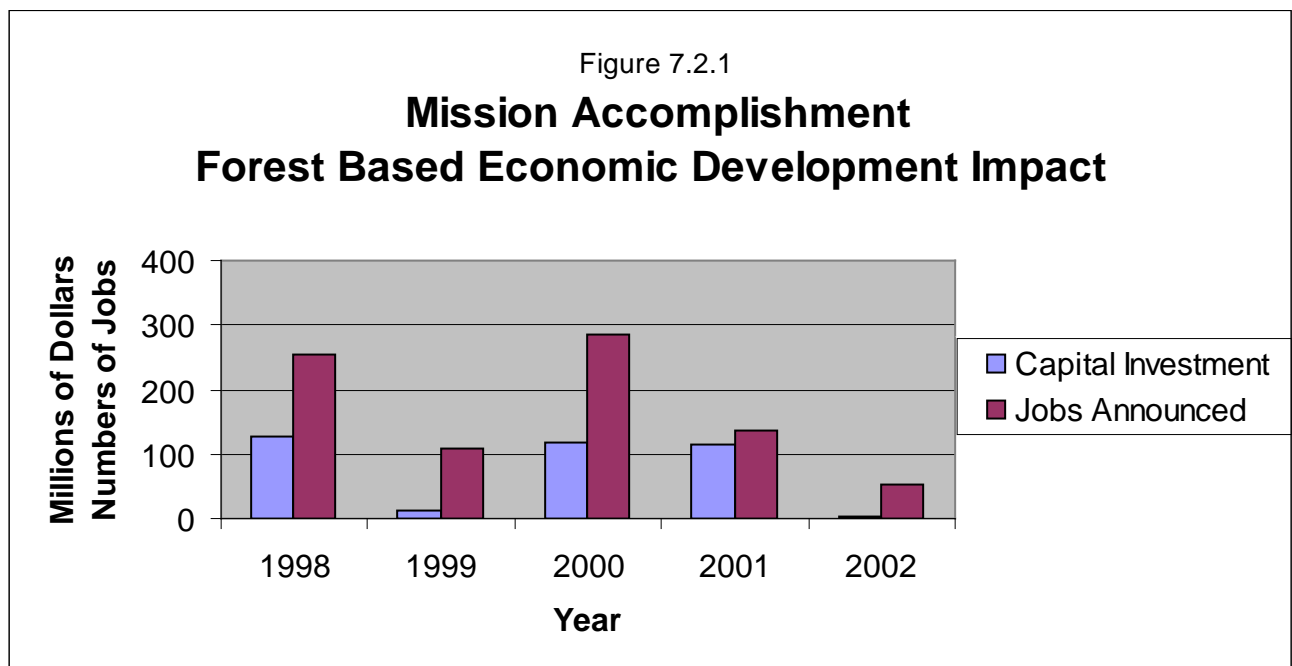


7.2 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment?*

**Enhance the Resource**

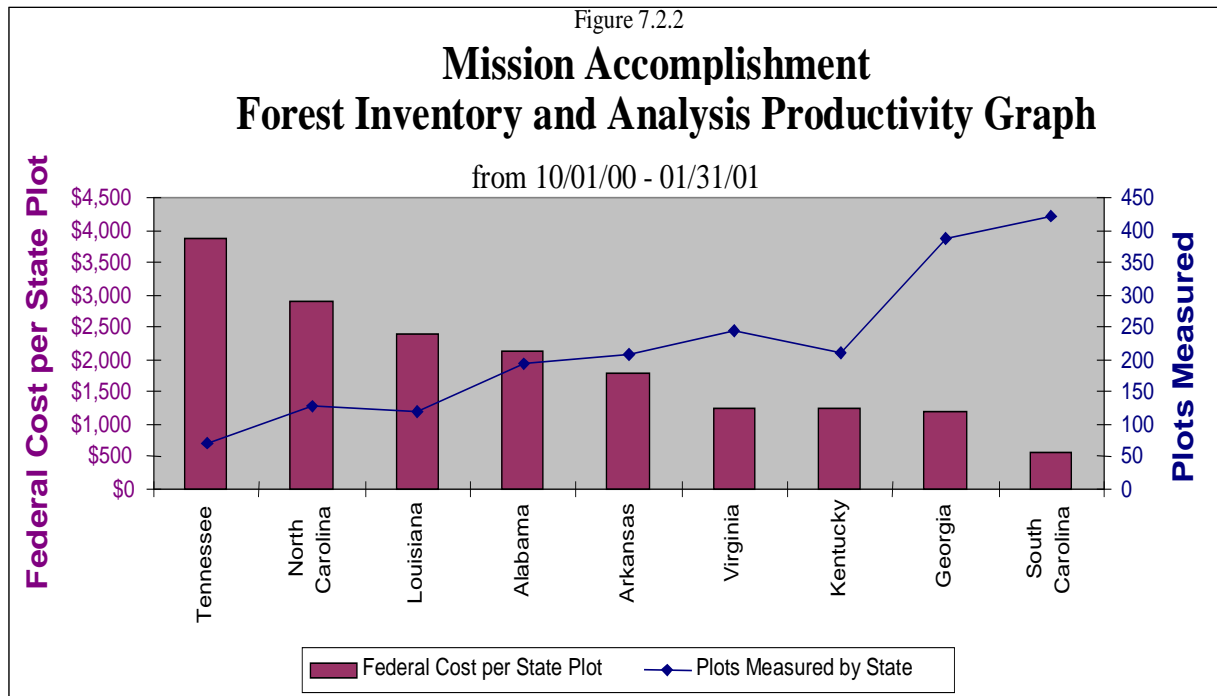
South Carolina's economy slowed dramatically during the year, mirroring the national economy. The reduction in the level of industrial development investment and job creation reflected this slowdown.

A new program was begun which will attempt to find or create additional uses for small trees and forest biomass. This will reduce fuels for potential wildfires while at the same time creating jobs by processing these resources for products.



The Forestry Commission was recently recognized by the US Forest Service as being a leader among the southern states in productivity and cost containment in collecting Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) data as illustrated in Figure 7.2.2. The Forestry Commission set an aggressive goal of measuring all plots in a three-year time period before initiating the 20% annual inventory.

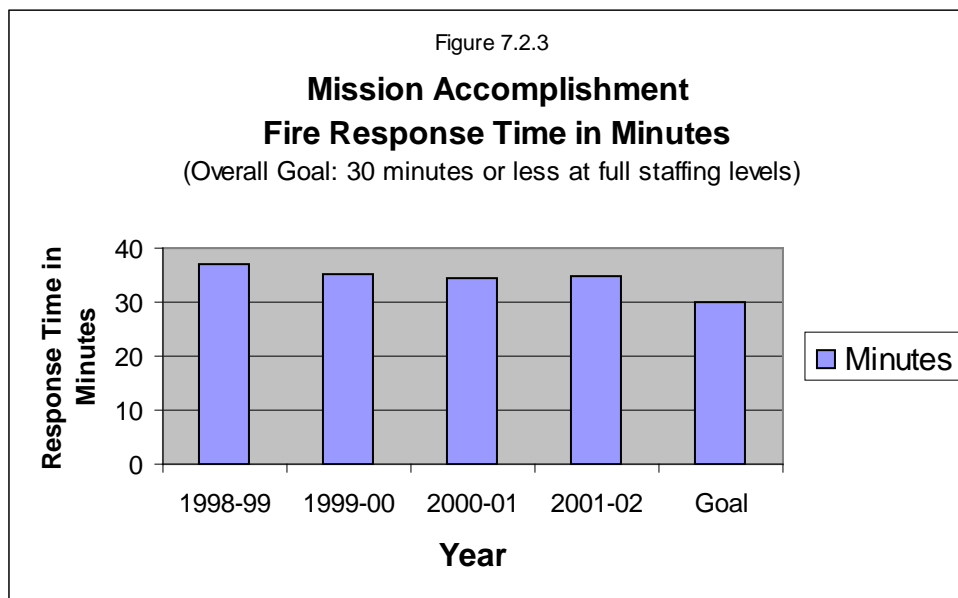
In fiscal year 2002, our work force was reduced from six crews to three crews as a result of budget cuts. Therefore, the rate of production has decreased on plot measurements.



## Protect the Resource

Response time to wildland fires is dependent upon many factors, some of which are beyond our control, such as traffic congestion and budget related staffing levels. We refer to fire response time as the time from when we receive the first report of a wildfire until the time our fire warden arrives on the scene.

Internally we measure the different segments of response time and strive to improve each segment with an goal of reducing overall response time to 30 minutes or less at full staffing levels. Figure 7.2.3 illustrates that our average response time actually increased by 0.4 minutes. Budget mandated reductions in staffing from attrition, early retirement incentive programs, and reductions in force may cause this time to further increase.



The number of full time investigators decreased from four to two officers due to budget mandated reductions and staffing from attrition and early retirement incentive programs. This will reduce our ability to investigate in an efficient and timely manner

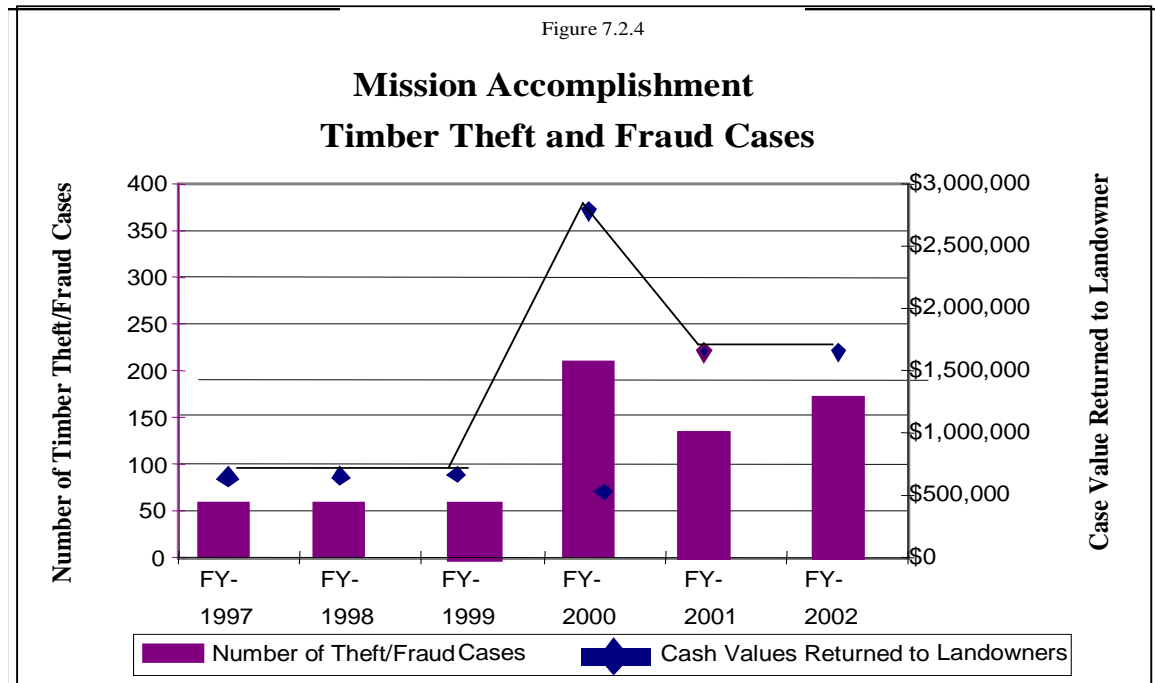
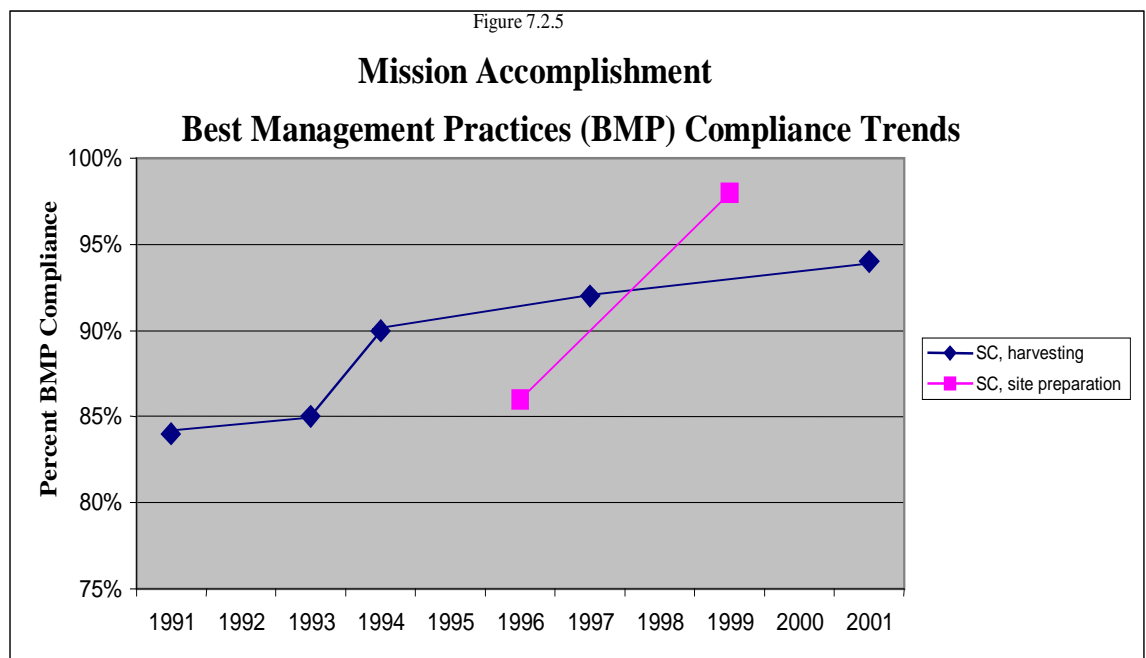
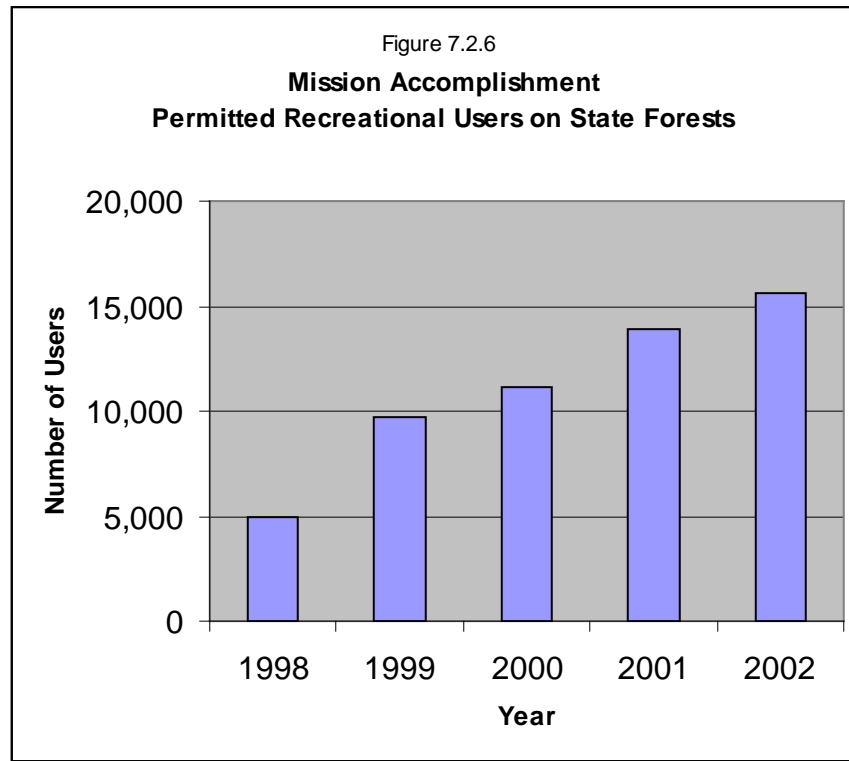


Figure 7.2.5 shows compliance with harvesting BMPs from previous surveys. Compliance for harvesting BMPs was 84.5% in 1991, 84.7% in 1993, and 89.5% in 1994, 91.5% in 1997. A new survey was initiated in the fall of 2001 to update BMP compliance. Two hundred sites were located and inspected for compliance with BMPs relating to timber harvesting throughout the state. Compliance with harvesting BMPs rose to 94% in the initial phase of a two-year study. In the winter of 2002, site preparation BMPs were evaluated on the same 200 sites and an additional 100 site prepared tracts. A third and final site visit to each monitoring location will be conducted in early 2003 to determine site preparation BMP compliance, regeneration methods, site stabilization, conversion to other uses, and other related factors. Results from all three site visits will be published as soon as the field data collection is completed.

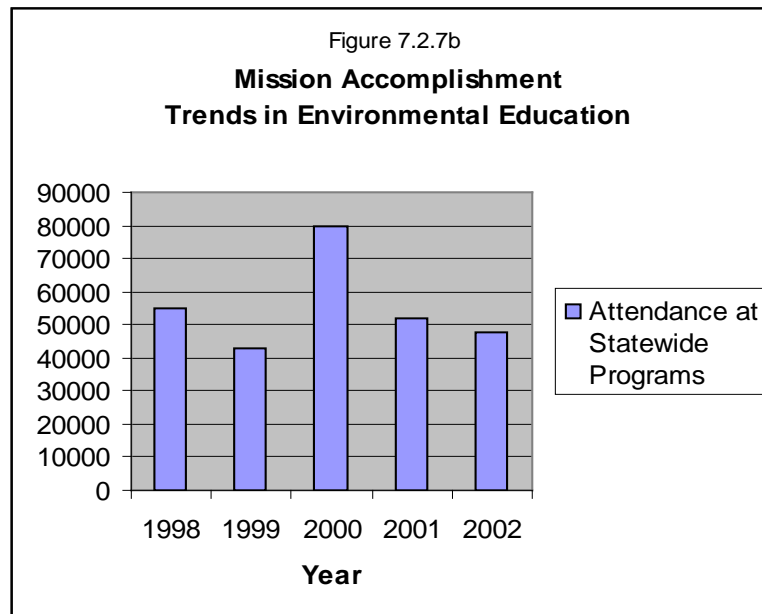
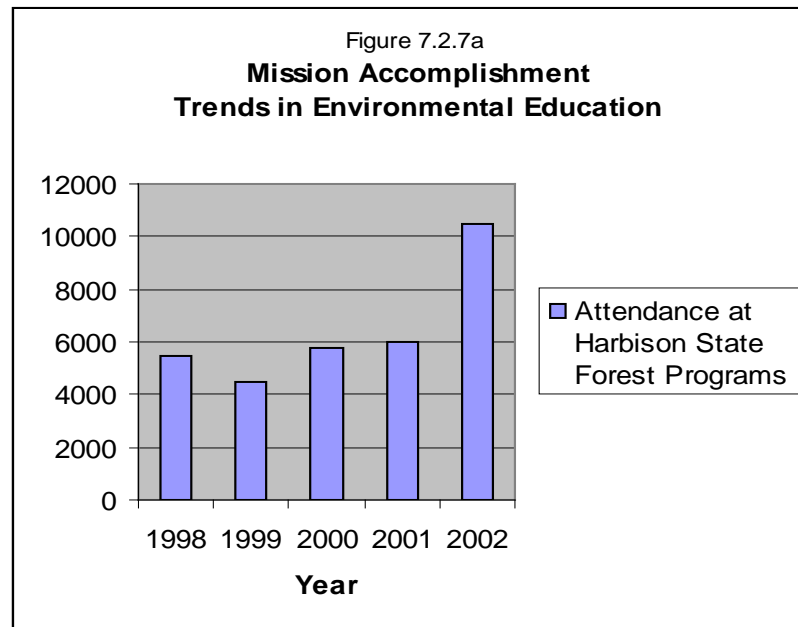


## Manage the Resource





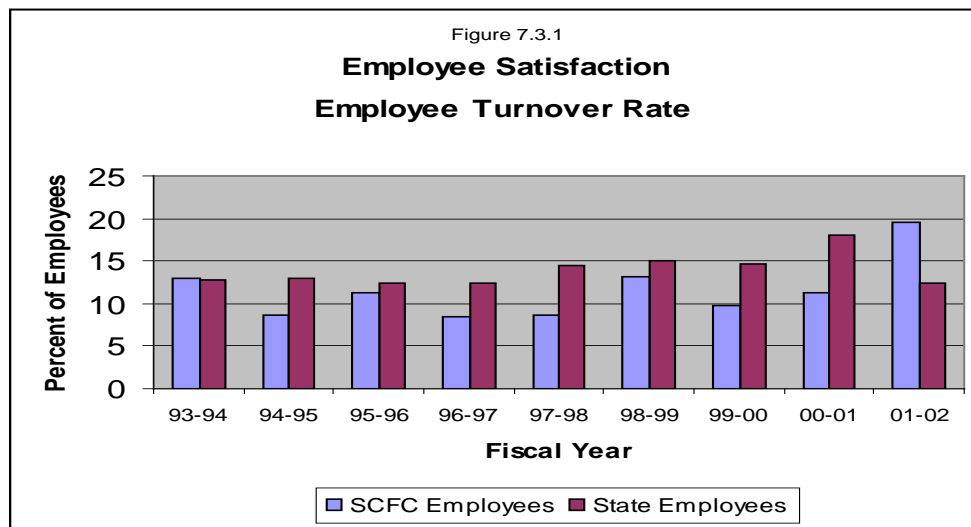
## Raise Awareness About the Resource



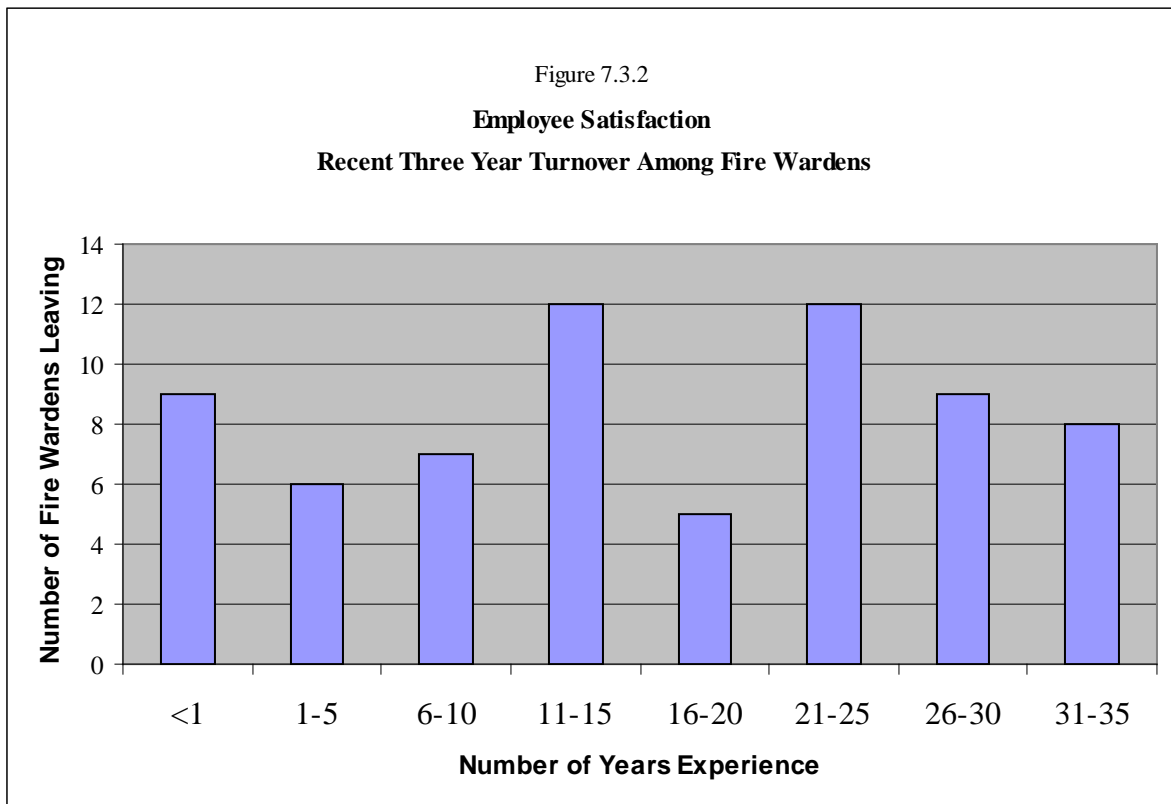
7.3 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of employee satisfaction, involvement, and development?*

During the period from 7/96 to 10/00 a total of 65 Employees have received performance pay increases or pay bonuses in recognition of outstanding contributions to the agency. We consider this financial recognition incentive to be a high priority, and we will strive to reinstate these programs once budgets improve and funding becomes available.

The average state service for all state employees is 11.5 years, compared to the average state service for Forestry Commission employees of 13.5 years. We believe this comparison is indicative of our employees enjoying their work and their working environment.



Forestry Wardens comprise 34% of the total number of agency employees, which is the largest job category of employees in the agency. During the period 7/1/98 – 6/30/02, of the 68 Wardens who left employment, 41 retired. Figure 7.3.2 shows the experience level of the 68 who left employment. Not only does Figure 7.3.2 demonstrate the longevity and successful careers of many of our wardens it also points out the need for extensive recruitment efforts and effective new employee training programs.



The SCFC turnover rate increased drastically as a direct result of budget related Voluntary Separation Programs and Retirement Incentive Programs implemented in the agency to avoid layoffs.

During the period 1/1/97 – 6/30/02 statistics from the Office of Human Resources show 1,221 grievances were filed by state employees. Of that number, only 2 were filed by Forestry Commission employees. This is an indication of employee satisfaction.

Participation in the Physical Fitness Program is required for all fireline employees and for those that volunteer to assist with fireline duties. In figure 7.3.3 the total number of employees decreased from October 2001 to June 2002 due to budget mandated reductions in staffing from attrition and early retirement incentive programs.

Figure 7.3.3

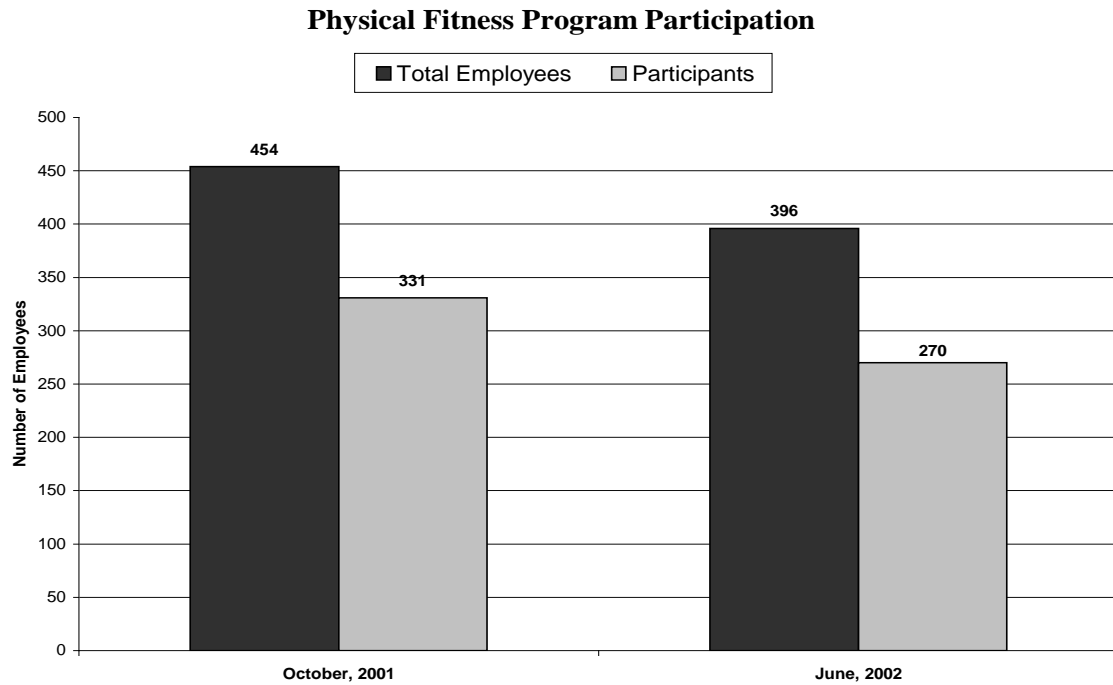
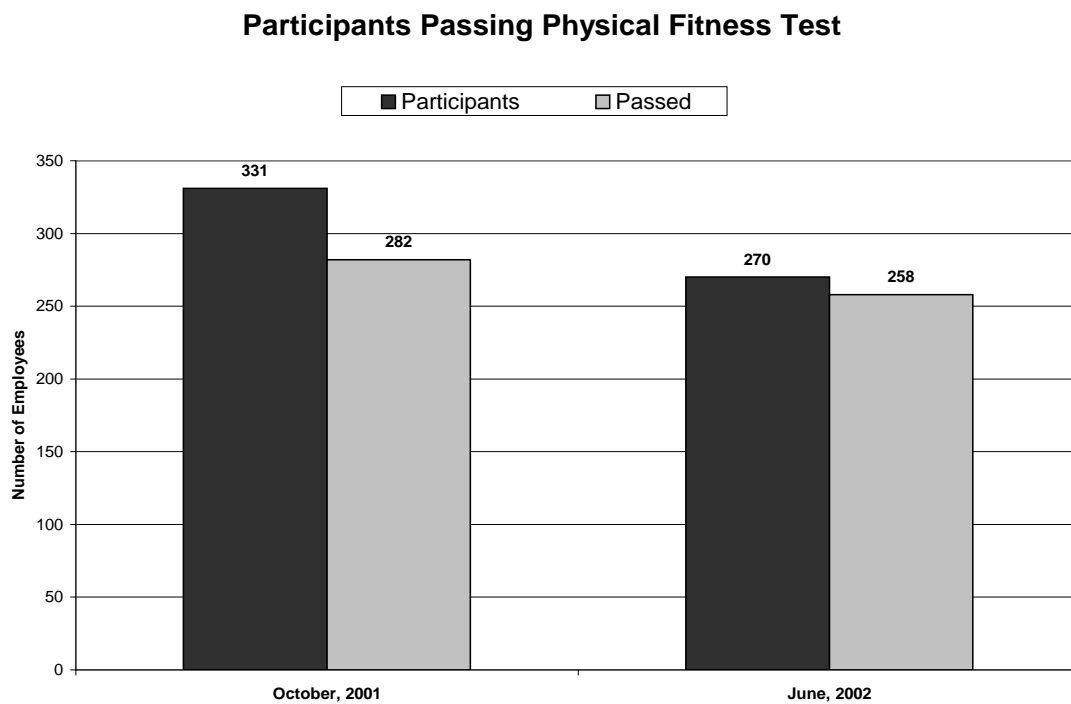


Figure 7.3.4



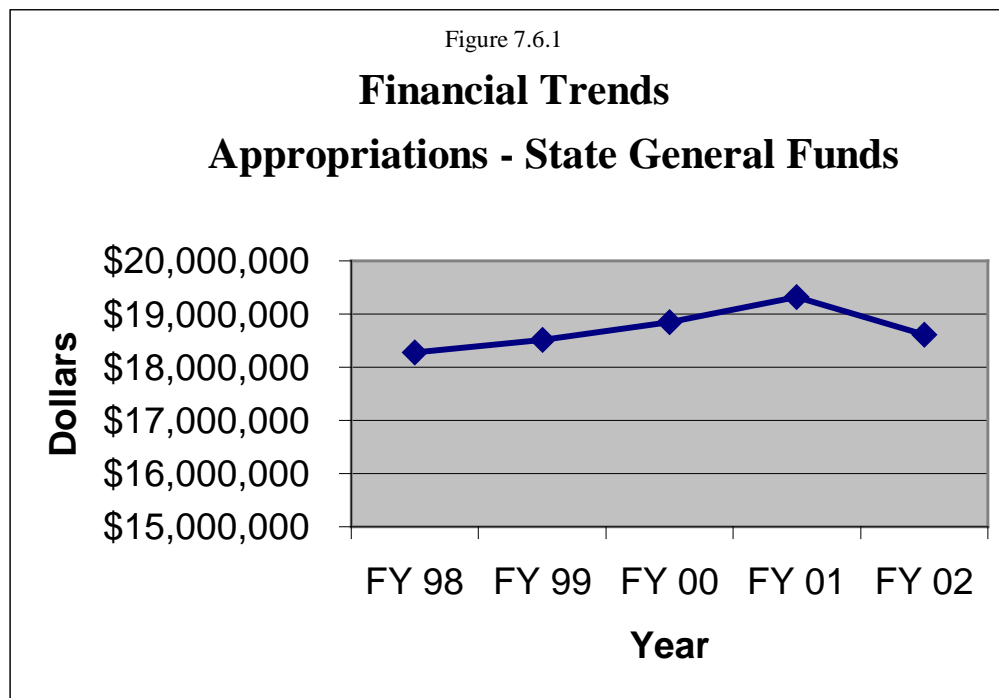
*7.4 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of supplier/contractor/partner performance?*

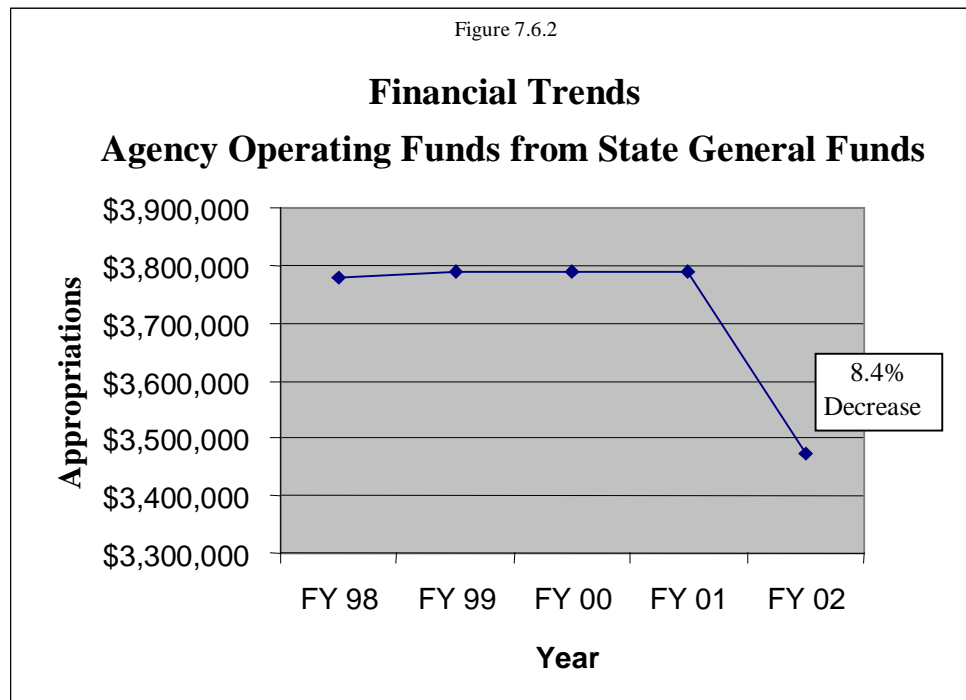
The use of contract seedling lifting crews at Taylor Nursery in Edgefield County has improved our ability to meet our customer's seedling needs in a more efficient manner. Prior to using contractors, seedlings were lifted and packed with temporary workers or work-release inmates from a nearby correctional facility, with production rates typically under 500,000 seedlings per day. Production rates have doubled using contract labor with production rates of 800,000 to 1,000,000 per day. This allows the nursery to respond to large requests for seedlings in a timely manner, even in unfavorable weather conditions. Agency employees ensure the quality of our seedling products by inspecting random samples of packed seedlings.

*7.5 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and citizenship?*

We are subject to financial audits, Federal Aviation Administration inspections and regulations, and OSHA regulations. We have audits in the areas of accounting, purchasing, insurance, and classification, and compensation and they have all been performed without findings of audit exceptions in each of the past four years.

*7.6 What are your current levels and trends of financial performance?*





Our three regions have experienced a change in their source of operating funds. Over the past seven years an increasing percentage of their operating funds has been derived from forestry services to landowners. Figure 7.6.3 illustrates that 80% of region operating budgets are now from non-state funds. Many of these revenue-generating services are weather dependent. Wet weather postpones or cancels forestry practices such as prescribed burning or firebreak plowing. Consequently revenues may be down that year, resulting in reduced operating funds. This makes operational planning difficult.

Figure 7.6.3

